

This information is intended for non-commercial suction dredge miners.



Suction Dredge Mining QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

Q: Do I need any permits to operate a suction dredge?

A: Yes. To operate a suction dredge in California, you need to obtain a permit from the California Department of Fish and Game (CDFG) under Section 5653 of the Fish and Game Code. Please visit the CDFG website for more information: <http://www.dfg.ca.gov/fish/Administration/Permits/index.asp>

Q: Is there a Water Board regulatory program for suction dredge mining activities?

A: The Water Boards are currently working with the CDFG to include water quality protection measures in its regulatory program. Water Board contact information is available at: <http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/contact/index.html>

Q: How should mercury be stored?

A: Store mercury in unbreakable containers with lids that seal. Avoid inhaling mercury vapors. Please visit the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency website for more information: <http://www.epa.gov/mercury/exposure.htm>

Q: How should spent nitric acid contaminated with mercury be stored?

A: Store spent nitric acid contaminated with mercury in acid-safe containers with lids that seal.

Q: How is mercury harmful to me?

A: 1) Mercury vapor can kill.
2) Inhaling fumes from nitric acid reacting with mercury can kill or cause brain damage.
3) Eating fish high in mercury can cause neurological damage and death.

Q: Why shouldn't I dump spent nitric acid contaminated mercury and mercury into streams, on the ground, into pit toilets, and into any toilet anywhere, anytime?

A: Do not dump spent nitric acid contaminated mercury and mercury because these are extremely toxic hazardous wastes. They leave toxic residues in the soil or on plants, are harmful to human health, and easily bioaccumulate in fish.

Q: How should I dispose of mercury or spent nitric acid contaminated with mercury?

A: Take mercury or spent nitric acid contaminated with mercury to your local household hazardous waste program. Ensure that it is sealed in unbreakable containers. Please visit the CA Department of Toxic Substances Control's (DTSC) website for hazardous household waste disposal locations: <http://ccelearn.csus.edu/mercurylamp/content/resources5.htm>

For information or assistance with hazardous waste, call a DTSC Regulatory Assistance Officer at (800) 72-TOXIC (1-800-728-6942).

Q: Should I vaporize mercury from mercury amalgam in an open container?

A: Do not vaporize mercury from mercury amalgam in an open container anywhere, anytime. Mercury vapor can kill or cause brain damage to you or anyone in the immediate vicinity. Burning mercury off amalgam and mercury stained gold also contaminates soil and water in the immediate area with mercury in an extremely toxic and bioaccumulative form.

Reminder...

**Do not vaporize mercury from mercury amalgam
in an open container anywhere, anytime**



**Do not dump spent
nitric acid
contaminated with
mercury into streams**



**Do not dump spent
nitric acid
contaminated with
mercury into toilets**

